



# News Release

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## **Let's get physical: National, state plans promote activity to improve health**

*Washington State Department of Health applauds new U.S. policy, points to its own success*

**OLYMPIA** — Washington's Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan has a federal partner with today's release of the nation's first Physical Activity Plan. The plans take a policy approach to improving people's health. The national plan unveiled in Washington, D.C. today fits hand-in-glove with the state plan created in 2003.

Being physically active is important. Like the [state plan in Washington](#), the national plan aims to make it easy for Americans to be active. The plans call for action at all levels of government, as well as in schools, business and industry, health care, and transportation to make physical activity part of everyday life. Countless studies have shown physical activity helps prevent many chronic diseases and conditions, including obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. It also improves the outlook for people with those health issues.

"We know healthy communities are essential in fighting chronic diseases," said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. "We've got to make sure we have policies in place to make that happen. How can people be active if they're putting their lives on the line when they bicycle on busy roadways, or send children walking to school without sidewalks?"

Washington's plan recommends that communities offer several travel options: walking, biking, and public transit. Recently the state health department supported and helped design a series of regional forums intended to bring together city, county, and transportation professionals to find ways to improve roadways for pedestrian and bicycle safety. The Washington State Department of Transportation was also involved in the work.

Schools need support to offer physical education classes, recess, and before-and-after-school activity programs that are a permanent and routine part of the school day. Several state agencies, including the Department of Health, [coordinate school health efforts](#) to support needed changes for student health and success.

Healthy Communities Washington is the agency's initiative to improve health in our state at the local level. The Department of Health funds Healthy Communities projects and gives training on how to change policies to support healthy choices. About a third of Washington's counties have Healthy Communities projects.

Learn more about [Washington's successes](#) and about the [National Plan](#) online.

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Visit the Washington Department of Health Web site at <a href="http://www.doh.wa.gov">http://www.doh.wa.gov</a> for <i>a healthy dose of information</i> .
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